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REFORMULATING IDENTITY IN MEDIEVAL CASTILIAN HAGIOGRAPHY: VISIONS, DREAMS, AND THE ASCETIC IMPERATIVE

> Once Chuang Chou dreamt he was a butterfly, a butterfly flitting and fluttering around, happy with himself and doing as he pleased. He didn't know he was Chuang Chou. Suddenly he woke up and there he was, solid and unmistakable Chuang Chou. But he didn't know if he was Chuang Chou who had dreamt he was a butterfly, or a butterfly dreaming he was Chuang Chou. Between Chuang Chou and a butterfly there must be *some* distinction![1]

The two major collections of medieval Castilian prose hagiography, both derived ultimately from Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda aurea*, deal with the legacy of early desert asceticism in radically differing ways. The most extensive and formally accomplished of the two, the *Gran flos sanctorum*, offers readings for no fewer than twelve individual saints.[2] In addition to Macarius, Antony, Pelagia, Thaïs, and the five desert fathers whose legends are traditionally appended to the conclusion of the liturgical-sanctoral cycle (Pastor, John, Moses, Arsenius, and Agathon), it offers a brief interpolated reading for Jerome's Hilarion, but lavishes particular attention on Paul of Thebes and Mary of Egypt, whose legends are reworked from more extensive and authoritative sources: the former derived from Jerome's *Vita Pauli*, and the latter, Paul the Deacon's *Vita Sanctae Mariae Aegyptiacae, meretricis*.[3] In their totality, the twelve readings offer a profound comment not just on the function of the desert as a locus for purgation and ascetic self-reinvention, but on the centrality and importance to such experience of visions, dreams, and other forms of human/divine interaction. In the second of the two compilations, the *Estoria de los santos*, however, there is a distinctive and decisive truncation, with the rich and subtle variety of the desert tradition reduced to a functional minimum.[4] In one of its extant manuscripts the number of early ascetics falls by more than half.[5] The others, in contrast, confine themselves rather more spectacularly to token retellings of the legends of Antony and Mary of Egypt.[6] In place of a vibrant and mysteriously empowering landscape capable of fostering an intimate and active bond between human and divine, the desert is reduced to a convenient narrative setting, isolated geographically and symbolically from the corruption of urban society but dependent nonetheless on the orthodox structure and influence of the clergy, which continues to perform a crucial role in interpreting and disseminating the divine plan for humankind. The saints, correspondingly, become less able either to embrace

the potential for visionary and oneiric experience, or indeed, to use it in order to validate the veracity and efficacy of their transformations on the path to spiritual perfection. The question that arises, of course, is why the divergence between the two Castilian compilations should be so significant in this respect, and what it suggests not only about their formation and purpose, but more fundamentally, about the status of ascetic visions and dreams in the Middle Ages, and the reasons why, in certain contexts, they were regarded as being too controversial to be embraced – either in their totality or without significant conceptual modification.[7]

At its most basic level, the essence of visionary and oneiric experience is in transformation. The transition from perceived reality to a locus in which imaginal and ephemeral constructs express meanings beyond those of the everyday world is central to the development not just of self-perception, but of the inexorable evolution of saintly identity.[8] The vision of self that is constructed or projected – either by the individual or by another – functions as an ontological proxy that cannot, by definition, ever perfectly replicate its original. The distinction – to borrow a concept from modern narrative theory – could potentially be explained in terms of temporal disjunction, with the present reality of self pitted against past or future incarnations. In the terminology of Gérard Genette, analeptic projections (or flashbacks) serve as reminders (often painful or disturbing) of superseded selves accessible only by acts of memory or visionary imagination – the gulf between them emphasizing questions of metamorphosis and teleological fulfilment.[9] Conversely, prolepsis anticipates developments fundamental to the process of (self-)renewal, postulating a potential myriad of identities, as yet unknown, that could one day be rendered flesh. The resultant two-way process of displacement stresses the fragile impermanence not just of visions, dreams, and other forms of human/divine interaction, but more importantly, the notion of normalized or stabilized human identity.[10] Analeptic constructs could potentially be dismissed in this respect as fleeting anxieties – flashbacks to evolutionary phases of selfhood long since marked for extinction. Yet as the function of prolepsis is pre-emptive, and thus, temporally unverifiable at the point of elaboration, the implication is not simply that imagination could one day replace physical matter, but that by so doing, the self – trapped continuously in an ongoing process of revision and renewal – is marked by a fundamental ontological uncertainty. In fact, the notion of human permanence becomes little more than an illusion or false premiss, as unreal and illusive as the content of visions and dreams.[11]

The implications for a broader appreciation of the desert tradition are significant. If the past cannot be detached from the present, but is coterminous with it, a multiplicity of bygone selves could potentially bear on the construction of present and future identities. The future, likewise, moves from the inchoate to a sequence of potential outcomes into which the present reality of self could be channelled. The mechanics of realization become an act of will, as reality mimics illusion through a process of conscious aspiration or desire. Analepsis, in this sense, emphasizes the effectiveness of transformations already undertaken,

while prolepsis inscribes the future not as a conventionally constituted temporal plane connected in straightforward linear terms to the present, but as an imaginal locus in which conceptions of identity can be fashioned or honed by acts of (self-)knowledge or perception. Correspondingly, dichotomies of reality/illusion and object/mimic become as unstable as the shifting sands of the desert, with visionary and oneiric experience capable of undermining confidence in conventional taxonomies. Emphasis instead is placed on the subjective and aesthetic scrutiny of the self, or the power of the scopic drive, which represents the pleasure in seeing.[12] This invariably renders the invisible visible and the intangible tangible through the adoption of a suggestive and allusive language of symbolic association defined and inflected by the value-system of the beholder. The corollary is that visionary projections of the self cannot ever be truly independent of their immediate contextual environment or function as ontologically autonomous entities.

Central to this experience, as Patricia Cox Miller has argued, is the corporeal body, which is the locus in which (self-)evolution is staged. The visionary or oneiric subject undergoes a process of dislocation that temporarily severs bonds to the immediate physical environment. In the symbolic setting constructed thereafter, issues of progression and development are explored as reformulations of the physical body. The self, which is repudiated, comes face to face with an expression of 'what he or she is *not*, or does not yet know with certainty that he or she *is*'.[13] This, as Miller argues, accords with Michel Foucault's understanding of the essential paradox of early Christian asceticism, which presents the path to self-knowing as an act of self-renunciation.[14] More fundamentally, it reinforces the traditional Christian assumption of the functional interdependence of body and soul, for as Gavin Flood has convincingly argued, 'a soul is a soul only by virtue of embodiment'.[15] Accordingly, asceticism can be characterized as a process of self-destruction and cognate reinvention, and it is by no means coincidental that the legends of desert saints should be permeated in this respect by experiences that depict iterative stages of transformation on the path to inner perfection. The ascetic self, as Miller affirms, is 'an unfinished work of art', a virtuous soul trapped in a fleshly prison – 'a roadblock' which must be overcome for development to be possible.[16] Yet for aspirational constructs to be realized in the imaginal rhetoric of visions and dreams, they must, by definition, be expressed 'in terms of the body, the very thing that was preventing the attainment of the soul's desire'.[17]

This is not, of course, a process of exact corporeal duplication. Traditional iconography commonly depicts souls as birds and sin as filth or blackness. What matters is that projected physical forms stand in proximity to their originals so as to facilitate reformulations of the self. The representation of desert experience can in this respect be related to a range of critical discourses predicated on explorations of the fundamentally binary evolution of character – particularly the second self, the doppelgänger, or the opposition between ego and alter ego.[18] The body, which is the essential signifier, offers a projection of imagined identity in a locus where, paradoxically, it stands free of its original corporeal

impediment. The experience of visions and dreams can in this way be exploited as a sophisticated hermeneutic not simply for exploring the notion of self, but of struggling beyond it in the search for saintly perfection.[19] An obvious potential cause of controversy is that the struggle can at times be misdirected, for as the legends of various ascetic saints demonstrate, tales of diabolic appropriation are legion. The devil, eager to ensnare his victims, produces constructs that mimic the impression of divine sanction and legitimization embedded into other forms of visionary and oneiric activity. Novices may even become distracted or tempted by the allure either of fantasy or the honeyed words of false prophets. Yet as experience directly correlates to maturity, the need to exercise discernment progressively diminishes.[20] What remains, after the masquerade, is the imprimatur of divine authority, emblazoned not, as Miller notes, on a 'unitary, epistemologically certifiable self', but 'many possible senses of self'.[21] These, she adds, 'are fictive constructions anchored in imagination' that, rather unsettlingly, lead to an impression of self-identity 'authored not by the "I" but by the other'.[22]

It is partly for this reason that Christianity has often expressed ambivalence. The progression from vision or dream to charismatic (or potentially heretical) conviction strikes a hammerblow against the institutionalizing tendency of clerical authority, and so, almost inevitably, the experiences of ordinary believers, with no claims by office to special status, have been viewed with greater scepticism than those of saints and churchmen. This awkward duality, which has not yet been explored in relation to the two medieval Castilian compilations, produces a tension that, as Isabel Moreira has convincingly demonstrated, dominates medieval oneirology.[23] On the one hand, the egalitarian spirit of Christianity presupposes the establishment of pathways to the divine unmediated by the clergy. Yet on the other, the pragmatics of ecclesiastical organization require that power be centralized in the hands of a minority whose function as spiritual guide to the community would be undermined by competing claims to authority. This effective act of professionalization delimits the value of lay experience whilst presenting that of the saints and clergy as veridical. Hagiography, correspondingly, becomes a 'discourse of privilege' predicated not on questions of universal piety, but on exclusivity and inimitable spiritual status.[24] The vision in this respect becomes a potent hierarchical signifier, or as Moreira cogently affirms, 'a compelling way of communicating ideas about the nature of spiritual authority and leadership'.[25]

The complexity of this issue makes it important to focus in detail on the formulation of the two Castilian compilations and the uses to which they would have been put. The most formally accomplished, the *Gran flos sanctorum*, offers a series of erudite and rhetorically cadenced readings that could potentially have been designed for oral delivery to a captive audience of monks or nuns. Of particular note is an impression of rhythmic elegance underpinned by the adoption of traditional oral formulas. Its frame-text, Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda aurea*, is broadly recognizable, although as many of his readings are replaced by longer and more authoritative versions, its scope is more ambitious.

The second compilation, the *Estoria de los santos*, also reworks Voragine, but tends throughout toward contraction. This is most noticeable in the number of readings, which is reduced, and in the tendency within the texts toward stylistic abbreviation, chiefly with complex aspects of dogma, which are filtered out in favour of the inclusion of popular, often exaggerated, anecdotes. A related, and highly distinctive, feature is the essential malleability of its texts, with later manuscript recensions displaying evidence not simply of scribal interference, but of full-scale attempts to improve on the colourless and gnarled syntax of the recensions from which they were copied.[26] Its purpose in this respect is not wholly clear, but as several interpolated texts assume the form of sermons, it may have been intended as a repository of material to be developed in extemporized oral delivery to an unlettered audience.[27] The parlous material state of the manuscripts, copied carelessly onto paper rather than parchment, and in certain instances displaying evidence of careless preservation, supports this hypothesis, although an absence of marginal annotation militates against their precipitous classification purely as working copies.

This caveat aside, the relationship between the *Gran flos sanctorum* and the *Estoria de los santos* pits erudite against popular, and a fixed text against a seemingly malleable series of cribs that could potentially have been modified almost *ad infinitum* in performance. It also draws a distinction between the orthodox and routine stability of daily readings designed for dissemination in monastic environments and the work of preachers operating more casually (or perhaps even spontaneously) in the lay domain. This divergence invites contrast and comparison, not just of the dialogic relationship between the anthologies and the contexts for which they were designed, but of the extent to which they embed evidence of ideological manipulation in their shaping of individual hagiographic traditions. The question, in essence, concerns the distinction between materials in the *Gran flos sanctorum* – delivered by professionals in their fixed and polished totality to a rigidly disciplined audience – and those that retain the potential to grow beyond the recorded physical form of the texts preserved by the manuscripts of the *Estoria de los santos*. The issue is, of course, unanswerable for the most part, for as with other manifestations of orally manipulated literature, we cannot now be certain of the impromptu gestures, the spontaneously contrived extrapolations, or the specific tonal emphasis adopted by the preachers in performance. Nor can we compare and contrast the relative success of individual iterations of the same legend, either in the hands of different clerics, or in terms of the ongoing chronological development of materials and attitudes. We can, however, make reasonable deductions on the basis of the materials preserved as pre-delivery transcriptions in the extant manuscripts, and consider how they might thereafter have been adapted in performance by the clerics who transmitted them.[28]

The possibility that some distinctions could be attributed to patterns of descent from partially differing Latin archetypes is not one that can easily be discounted. Yet as the two compilations freely adapt their originals and conflate them with materials garnered from alternative sources, it becomes

difficult to postulate even tentative connections. More likely, and indeed, far more profitable as line of enquiry, is the possibility that they were shaped by distinct ideologies, developed partly in relation to assumptions pertaining to the presumed theological sophistication of their target audiences, and partly as a residual distillation (conscious or otherwise) of the specific doctrinal beliefs of their compilers. Notable in this respect are the *Gran flos sanctorum* treatments of Pelagia and Thaïs, which are underpinned by experiences in which the self is related to its imaginal other as part of a distinct and coherent ideology of (self-)evolution. With Pelagia, the emphasis falls strongly on the proleptic elaboration of identity. Nonnus, her confessor, witnesses her decadent parade through the streets of Antioch and weeps bitterly, complaining that she invests more time beautifying her body than he devotes to his soul. Later, in his billet, he experiences an allegorical dream vision in which he learns of her eventual redemption:[29]

> E como él dixesse aq*ue*stas cosas, durmióse adesora. E vido que estava diziendo missa e que venía una paloma muy negra e fidionda, e andava bolando aderredor dél. E como él mandasse que saliessen de la yglesia los catecominos, desaparesció la paloma. E tornósse a él después de la missa. E él metióla en agua linpia e salió blanca e clara, e boló tan alto que no*n* podía ser vista. (p. 137)
>
> (And as he said those things, he promptly fell asleep. And he saw that he was saying Mass and that an exceedingly black and stinking dove had arrived and was fluttering all around him. And as he instructed the catechumens to leave the church, the dove disappeared. And it returned to him after the Mass. And he immersed it in holy water and it came out white and clear, and it flew so high that it could not be seen.)

Nonnus' experience follows the conventions of medieval theory and offers a symbolic, subconscious reworking of his preoccupation for the fate of Pelagia's soul.[30] Its status as prophetic and God-given is unambiguous, and as such, it exudes an aura of absolute and unquestionable authority. Relationships between signifiers and signifieds are lucid and cogent: Pelagia is the dove, water connotes baptism, while apt dichotomies are fashioned by oppositions between blackness/iniquity and whiteness/virtue. Other elements, such as the stench of sin and the flight to heaven, invert deeper elements of structure, establishing anachronies that affect the relationship between analepsis and prolepsis.[31] We are reminded, for instance, of the odours that perfume the air as Pelagia walks the streets of Antioch ('olores de gran suavidad', p. 137), whilst being invited pre-emptively to consider her incorporation into the ranks of the elect, as she ascends to a realm of perfection denied to those who remain below. The vision in this sense provides an impression not just of the distinction between Pelagia's sinful and virtuous selves, but a potent symbolic formulation of the – as yet – imaginal other that she is destined to become.

The reading for a second desert penitent, Thaïs, is shaped in comparable terms. Paphnutius, her confessor, seeks confirmation that she has been forgiven, whereupon a fellow monk, Paul the Simple, experiences a vision of incontrovertible authority, showing that her suffering in the anchorhold has been

rewarded. The anticipatory element of Pelagia's legend is in this way replaced by retrospective validation for a course of palliative action already undertaken:[32]

> E como orasen aquella noche sin cessación, Paulo el sinple (discípulo de Sant Antón) alçó los ojos e vido el cielo abierto con un lecho muy precioso e conpuesto, e que lo guardavan tres vírgines de caras muy claras. E aquestas tres vírgines eran: la una, el themor de la pena advenidera (que la apartara del mal); e la segunda, la vergüeña de los pecados que cometiera (e le ganara perdón del Señor); e la tercera, el amor de la virtud e bondat (que la alçara al regno celestial). E como Sant Paulo el symple pensase en su coraçón que aquel lecho tan fermoso era para su padre el abad Antón, vino a él una boz que le dixo: 'Non es aquel lecho para tu padre el abad Antón, mas para Tarsis, aquella muger pública que se convertió al Señor de todo coraçón.' (p. 134)
>
> (And as they prayed that night without resting, Paul the Simple (disciple of Saint Antony) raised his eyes and saw the heavens open with a most delightful and well-made bed, and that it was guarded by three virgins with most beautiful faces. And these three virgins were: the first, fear of pain to come (which separated her from evil); and the second, shame for the sins she had committed (which earned her the Lord's pardon); and the third, love of virtue and goodness (which raised her to the celestial realm). And as Saint Paul the Simple thought in his heart that that most beautiful bed was for his father, Abba Antony, a voice came to him that said: 'That bed is not for your father, Abba Antony, but for Thaïs, that public woman who converted to the Lord with all her heart.')

The relationship between celestial knowledge and visionary identity invites comment, particularly as it can be mapped almost perfectly onto the classic definition of the second self, as outlined by C. F. Keppler.[33] With Pelagia, an oneiric construct appears for a fleeting moment, as the dove that represents her disembodied soul ascends daintily to the heavens but subsequently disappears from the narrative. Thereafter, the projection of future identity slowly crystallizes into physical form as she undertakes her penance. The self that we know, and can relate to, is the original, and once the dream has been concluded, it is only through the corrupt individual (and shortly after, the vulnerable penitent) that we are able to access the projection of Pelagia's mature and saintly self. The true metamorphosis is absorbed by a narrative elision that compresses the impact of her years in the Holy Land into a few short sentences, in this way producing a significant distinction between narrative and chronological time.

With Thaïs, however, the situation is more extreme. We know nothing of her newly fashioned celestial self until it is accessed by Paul in a vision towards the end of the narrative. From the moment of penance we attempt to anticipate the resolution of her pursuit of purity, but we cannot reach the second self through the original. In fact, the sinful or degraded self (the harlot who exchanged the self-imposed degradation of prostitution for the self-imposed degradation of the anchorhold) continues to fill the narrative.[34] The trinity of virgins is not even a discrete representation of individual ontology, but a symbolically unified identity that in some way mimics the tripartite constitution of the human soul, and, ultimately, the Godhead. This makes Thaïs's second self more unknowable,

more uncanny, than that of Pelagia, and in contrast to the dove that flies around the church, it has no grounding whatsoever in terrestrial reality. The celestial bed is precisely that: it floats in the heavens but never touches the Egyptian desert.[35] The notion of replacement should be understood in this sense in absolute terms: imaginal projections of identity may be temporally conditioned, but while with Pelagia we gain a sense of slow physical atrophy through proleptic elaboration, with Thaïs, the emphasis on analepsis is such that the arrival of the vision comes almost as an act of implacable assassination. In fact, as soon as its content is reported, she dies. Her two selves coexist for a brief moment of narrative time, but only the future self, the stronger second self, which repudiates and thereby displaces its original, can go forward to salvation.

In both legends, the shaping of desert experience presupposes a certain level of theological sophistication on the part of the target audience. Visions and dreams are presented as a process of perception on the path to inner humility, and are bestowed only upon those who are professionally qualified as conduits. The projection of perfected self, mediated by clerical involvement, is authoritative and veridical. The desert, likewise, is presented not as a purely literal locus, divorced from the structures of orthodoxy, but, as James E. Goehring has argued, as a cipher for inner withdrawal and separation from the world.[36] In the *Estoria de los santos*, however, the treatment of ascetic experience is different. This is partly a product of its reduced scope and the tendency throughout towards stylistic and conceptual abbreviation. Yet the major factor is the inculcation of a more proscriptively centralizing ideology. Its audience, which is accredited with a lesser degree of theological refinement, is brusquely marshalled towards a series of carefully circumscribed assumptions about the relationship between the individual and the Church. It becomes important, in view of this, to bear in mind not only the issue of lay status, but the extent to which individual texts could have been manipulated in performance by the clerics who preached them. A factor to consider here is the date of the collection, which linguistic evidence, although far from conclusive, could potentially locate in the third or fourth decades of the fourteenth century, a period of tremendous turmoil in the medieval Church.[37] The collection could in this respect have been shaped by an awareness of the dangers of misinterpretation, particularly by heretical offshoots of the Franciscan movement, eager to embrace lives of absolute apostolic poverty and direct communication with God in isolation from the structures of ecclesiastical control.[38]

This perhaps explains why Pelagia and Thaïs are placed so securely in the hands of their confessors. The saints are not allowed to experience visions or access God, even when they attain a state of perfection beyond that of ordinary believers. It also explains why texts that deal more extensively with the empowering attractiveness of asceticism are excluded from the compilation. Visionary activity, unmediated by the validating hand of the clergy, may have presented too incendiary a notion – one too redolent of heresy – for it to have been embraced without significant reservation, or indeed, cutting. Most revealing in this respect is a consideration not of the anthology's omissions, but of the

handful of readings that are retained. The compilers of the *Estoria de los santos* clearly felt apprehensive about the desert legacy, but displayed no qualms about transmitting accounts of the holy harlots. This suggests that while prostitution was considered a relevant and attractive theme for dissemination in the context of a lay sermon, tales of monks exercising the right to self-determination or communicating directly with God through visionary experience were not. The conceptual organization of the *Gran flos sanctorum* accounts, which offer illustrations of women regulated and constrained by members of the clergy, confirms this. Of particular note is that the imaginal selves of Pelagia and Thaïs are projected through the scopic drive of male ecclesiastics, whose authority is validated and legitimized by the prophetic status of their experiences. The result, inevitably, is a sense not just of the professionalization of visionary and oneiric activity, but of a process of becoming authored not by the 'I', but by the fundamentally centripetal force of male ecclesiastical orthodoxy.[39]

The *Estoria de los santos*, however, remains acutely aware of overstating even this type of experience. The *Gran flos sanctorum* relates Nonnus' vision to factual observation ('vido que estava diziendo missa', p. 137) while its counterpart is rather more diffident: 'semejóle q*ue* dezía missa' (p. 139). The distinction between *ver* ('he *saw* that he was saying Mass') and *semejar* ('it *seemed* that he was saying Mass') may seem slight, but as the concluding portion of the vision is shaped in identical terms, with 'a qual ora desp*er*tó' ('at which he awoke') (p. 139) in place of 'después que el obispo vido aquesta visión' ('after the Bishop saw this vision') (p. 137), it cannot be dismissed as coincidental. In fact, the distinction between the texts sets the authority and veracity of a divinely ordained experience against doubt, uncertainty, and the hypnagogic vagaries of sleep. The *Estoria* may accept the dream as a prognostic, but it seems unwilling to countenance the possibility that God could have spoken directly, even to a member of the Church. Its treatment of Thaïs offers comparable evidence of ideological manipulation. The physical description of the virgins is eliminated so as to produce a more streamlined account, but of greater significance is the phrasing of the episode's final portion. The imposing and authoritative words of the Latin original, 'uox diuina respondit', are rendered predictably in the *Gran flos sanctorum* as 'vino a él una boz que le dixo' (p. 134), as the text preserves an impression of the essentially ineffable nature of divine authority.[40] Yet in the *Estoria de los santos*, which seems fearful of human/divine interaction, the celestial virgins speak in place of God, offering their own interpretation: 'E ella*s* dixiéro*n*le: "N*uestr*o señor, no*n* es de tu padre Antó*n*, mas es de la mala muger Tays q*ue* fue"' ('And they said to him: "My lord, it's not for your father Antony, but for the evil woman that Thaïs was"') (p. 136). The text in this way eliminates representations of human/divine communication by interposing the power of celestial intermediaries – a message that seems carefully contrived to ensure that it inspires an appropriately orthodox reaction in the minds of its target audience.

The legend of a third desert penitent, Mary of Egypt, provides an illuminating counterpoint. The *Estoria de los santos* offers an abbreviated reworking of Voragine's original, and with the exception of a disembodied voice that instructs

Mary to seek salvation beyond the river Jordan, it eliminates representations of human/divine interaction.[41] The version in the *Gran flos sanctorum* reworked from Paul the Deacon, however, offers a richly detailed consideration of visionary experience and its impact on questions of ontological reinvention. The focus of the narrative falls initially not on Mary, but on her confessor, Zosimus, whose commitment to ascetic self-improvement establishes a striking element of doubling. This is produced partly by the development of explicit parallels between saint and confessor, but also by the curious way in which Zosimus is distinguished from his namesake, the heretic, for as the narrator affirms: 'otro es éste e otro fue aquél' ('this man is another and that man was another') (p. 4).[42] Although factually beneficial, the narrator's clarification is fundamentally double-edged, for it succeeds in alerting the audience not simply to the potential for ontological misinterpretation, but to the possibility that constructs of identity could be formulated in terms of antithesis or incongruence. In fact, the notion of self becomes a question not simply of what one is (or appears to be), but of what one is not.

Inevitably, visions prove significant in the formulation of an evocative frame of reference. Zosimus, the narrator promptly relates, is worthy of seeing celestial visions ('digno de ver visiones çelestiales', p. 4), but although the narrative thereafter fashions an explicit allusion to Matthew v.8, which presents theophany as a reward for the pure in heart, he is confronted by visionary projections that range from the elusive to the patently misunderstood, as knowledge of the divine is accrued only in an arrestingly circuitous fashion.[43] This suggests that the reference should be understood metaphorically rather than literally, as a pathway not to the sight of God, but to a recognition of divine resemblances embedded in the self or in others. The text in this respect reinforces the notion of *imitatio Christi* – the process of conscious self-modelling that approximates individual suffering to that of Christ. The underlying assumption is that, by smoothing away the uneven contours of identity, saints can subsume themselves into an ethos that renders the individual indistinct. The result, in temporal terms, is paradoxical, as typological analepsis becomes a further contributor to the proleptic elaboration of the fully repudiated ascetic self. In effect, Christ's past provides a blueprint for the saint's future.[44]

The obstacle that Zosimus faces, however, is that he must escape the self in order to redefine it, and in so doing, move closer to God. To make this possible, he is assisted initially by a mysterious figure who penetrates his innermost thoughts and instructs him to seek out a monastery on the banks of the river Jordan. He departs immediately thereafter, but in place of the visionary other that he eagerly attempts to pursue, he arrives at a locus that facilitates the reconstruction of identity in relation to a tangible corporeal other. The monks, who enact an extreme regime of ascetic self-repudiation, serve to catalyse an initial phase of development by inculcating collectivized lessons in humility that allow him to move closer to the imaginal projection of perfection against which he is currently adjudged to have fallen short. Importantly, the act of incorporation is symbolic and allusive, and should be understood not as an

invitation to dissolve the denominational autonomy of individual orders, but as a divinely sanctioned process of self-knowing and inner realization. Striking in this respect is the specific formulation of the ascetic imperative, which encourages a complete displacement of the self, and is in this respect suitable for the demands only of erudite consumption: 'por que tú puedas conosçer que ay otras carreras mayores que las que tú tienes, sal de tu tierra e casa de tu padre, e de entre tus parientes, ... e ve al monasterio que es açerca del rrío Jordán' ('so that you might know that there are other roads greater than those that are you are taking, leave your land and the house of your father, and from amongst your relations, ... and go to the monastery that is near to the River Jordan') (p. 5).

Yet the most important corporeal other is Mary, who offers a unique projection of saintly ontology. Zosimus is heartened by the monks, who serve as yardsticks for self-reinvention, but to gain deeper insights he retreats to the desert during Lent.[45] Specifically, his search is for a holy father ('santo padre', p. 9) from whom he might gain wisdom, but after twenty days his attention is drawn to a shadow that, according to the precise wording of the text, assumes an ontological status distinct from that of the body from which it was cast: 'E como estoviese orando, alçados los ojos al çielo, vido pasar a la parte derecha de donde orava, asý como una sonbra de cuerpo humanal' ('And as he was praying, his eyes raised to heaven, he saw pass to the right of where he prayed, as it were the shadow of a human body') (p. 9). The figure, of course, is Mary, and the implication is that she has evolved into an antithetical or shadow-self that is beyond straightforward understanding. The emphasis falls correspondingly on questions of taxonomy: the shadow is first reinterpreted by Zosimus as a malevolent apparition ('fantasía de algunt spíritu de maldat', p. 9), but then, corporeally, as a blackened figure scorched by the sun ('avía el cuerpo muy negro por el grand ardor del sol', p. 9). The process is later repeated in part, as evidence of Mary's miraculous ability forces him to question what he has seen and advance differing interpretations.[46]

The relationship between phenotypic transformation and the construction of cognate dichotomies of good/evil makes it possible to relate the encounter between Mary and Zosimus to advances in post-colonial discourse analysis. Mary, now black but saintly, displays the ontological ambivalence of a figure caught in the centrifugal/centripetal tension that draws to the orthodox centre whilst expelling to the marginalized periphery. She inspires attraction and disgust, and is at once both menacingly different, but also reassuringly familiar – a spiritual inspiration and a devil in disguise.[47] Zosimus, unable to locate or impose a stabilized identity, characterizes her both as teleological inspiration and impediment to self-advancement. Yet equally suggestive is the representation of gender, for as he mistakenly assumes that she is the holy father from whom he seeks to catalyse his own self-evolution, he unwittingly accredits her with the authority of the phallus.

The text in this way fuses various levels of reality. Empirical scrutiny and nightmare vision become intertwined, as sober judgement and spiritual discernment are subsumed into a process of (mis)identification that operates

through a now clearly fallible male cleric. Narrator and audience, bound by a common bond, accept that the desert is populated by devils and saintly fathers. Yet as feminine pronouns predominate long before Mary achieves genuine ontological validity through the apportioning of a name and a past, Zosimus continues to grope towards the projection of an appropriate identity. It is through his experience that we gain a sense of the awesome power of transformation. Seeing Mary, his frail body attempts to metamorphose into that of a sprightly youth, but is unable to do so. The text, which makes much of his infirmity, effectively produces a chiasmus: the monk who now regards himself as unworthy ('non digno', p. 12) evolves in self-perception, but can do nothing to counter the debilitating reality of age; Mary, in contrast, is corporeally transformed from harlot to ascetic, and white to black, but she cannot yet accept that she has undertaken a successful remodelling of the self. In fact, it is only after her experiences have been recounted analeptically in confession that she ceases to project herself as a sinful woman ('mugerçilla peccadora', p. 13), thereby laying her now superseded other to rest. Self-construction is in this way pitted against the various constructions of other authored by Zosimus' overactive imagination. Yet importantly, it is only the second self, the evolved construction of perfection and humility, that can progress comfortably towards salvation.

The legend is in this way comparable to those of Pelagia and Thaïs. A sinful soul is transformed into an antithetical projection of self and is welcomed thereafter into heaven. What is different is that the doubling of Mary and Zosimus produces an additional layer of narrative sophistication, as actual and imaginal constructs interact not simply with one another, but according to the application of differing temporal parameters. While Nonnus and Paphnutius remain rooted in a continuum of present time which denies them the capacity for development, Mary and Zosimus are led by explicit acts of divine intervention to undertake journeys towards a future destination and a cognate remodelling of the self. The process, fundamentally, is proleptic. Yet correspondingly, an inverse process of analeptic projection produces a different type of anachrony, as the narrative also examines selves already superseded. Notable in this respect is the retrospective account of Mary's youthful exploits, which emphasizes the subjective malleability of (self-)representation. Mary, now black but perfect in the eye of the beholder, continues to project herself analeptically as one who is externally beautiful but blackened internally by sin. The episode is comparable in this respect to the legends of various other desert saints, but perhaps most striking is that of Antony of Egypt, where the black/white polarity is partially modified. This produces a situation in which the besmirching blackness of the saint's repudiated other stands fully outside him, as his once lustful impulses are rendered incarnate in the guise of a black boy:[48]

> Como venciese una vez al espíritu de la fornicación por virtud de fe, aparescióle el diablo en semejança de moçuelo negro. E derribóse delante dél e dixo que era vencido dél, ca rogó al Señor que le demostrase al diablo que te*n*ptava a los mancebos de fornicación, e aparescióle el diablo en la forma suso dicha. E díxole

> Sant Antón: 'Non te temeré de aq*uí* adelante pues que en tan fea forma e tan vil me aparesciste.'
>
> (As he once overcame the spirit of fornication with the virtue of faith, the devil appeared to him in the form of a little black boy. And he bowed down before him and said that he had been vanquished by him, for he had prayed to the Lord that he might see the devil that tempted young men into fornication, and the devil appeared to him in the aforementioned form. And St Antony said to him: 'Henceforth, I shall not fear you because you have appeared to me in such an ugly and such a vile form.')

Confrontations between saints and devils are a pervasive feature of desert experience, but unique in this instance is that the devil is presented not as a distinct and fully autonomous entity, but as an externalized projection of Antony's once sinful impulses. The encounter can in this way be classified as an analeptic projection of a corporeal self that rereads its original by confronting it in the context of a visionary experience governed by the laws of a different order of reality. The fundamental issue is that the boy is not a self that could become, but, as with the self projected by Mary in her confession, one that has been – its existence terminated by the power of ascetic denial. It stands in this sense as a painful reminder of what the self once was but can no longer be: the swansong of a stage of evolution marked for extinction and expressed purely as an analepsis.

The explicit manipulation of colour symbolism in Antony's legend has been discussed in terms of anti-black sentiment and the representation of demonic forces, notably by Philip Mayerson, who notes that, despite the exotic attraction of the Song of Songs ('Nigra sum, sed formosa', i.15), 'black was not always beautiful'.[49] Most informative, however, is the contribution of David Brakke, which adapts post-colonial discourse analysis to energize a reading of the black-skinned other in relation to parallel discussions of the *Aethiops* or figure of sub-Saharan appearance.[50] Brakke's argument, which rises above the facile classification of images as positive or negative, shows how ethnic and somatic stereotypes were developed in discourses of socio-political domination to facilitate the construction of a recognizable ascetic self. This leads him to a consideration of questions of homoerotic desire and homosocial bonds, focusing on the stereotype of hypersexuality traditionally associated with the sub-Saharan *Aethiops*, and to a parallel discussion of the simultaneously attractive and repellent power of the self's erotic desire at a moment of sexual crisis. Rereading the episode in this light, Brakke offers a telling classification of the black boy, which, as a traditional image of evil, enables Antony to eschew temptation, and in this way reveal the exemplary discernment necessary for recognition as a saint. Moreover, as the process is conceptualized in patrilineal terms (with rhetorical relationships fashioned between boy/man and son/father), it establishes an impression not simply of progression and teleological fulfilment (from weak to strong, sin to virtue, and black to white), but of a securely adult and righteous ascetic identity predicated on the relationship between self and repudiated other.[51]

Yet the manipulation of colour symbolism has broader implications. Nonnus' dream depicts Pelagia as a black dove cleansed by the waters of baptism, while Zosimus sees Mary both as a shadow and a figure blackened by the sun. Thaïs is not referred to explicitly as black, but as her legend fashions a bold analogy between sin and excrement, making specific allusion to the accumulation of natural waste in her cell, her body is clearly subjected to a comparable form of phenotypic transformation.[52] The black/white dichotomy triggers a process of epidermalization in which skin colour becomes the essential signifier of identity.[53] This is underpinned by references to ugliness, visual and olfactory repugnance, but most commonly, impressions of unclean hypersexuality. The underlying assumption is that the pristine state of sanctity that renders the individual ripe for salvation presupposes the disavowal and alienation of the inner black that is fundamental to the unevolved, sexualized self. The process, which is of particular relevance to post-colonial analysis, is a natural extension of biblical precedents, such as the division in Genesis i.3–5 of dark from light.

Antony undergoes this experience in his youth and stands with confidence before an analeptic projection of his repudiated self. Nonnus' dream offers a symbolic, proleptic variant of this process, but it is striking that the transition from stinking blackness to pristine whiteness inverts the terrifying reality of Pelagia's ascetic trajectory, which renders her (as is the case with Mary of Egypt) ugly and sexually indeterminate. This is partly a product of transvestism, which distinguishes her legend from those of other desert saints. Yet a common denominator is that the distinction between sinful original and evolved other is explored not as it is with Antony – as a discrete separation of ontologically certifiable entities – but in terms of a hybrid, dualistic process of corporeal evolution/atrophy. This could potentially be related to male/female dichotomies and the influence of generic literary conventions that in some ways artificially detach the legends of the holy harlots from the broader desert context.[54] Its implications, however, are more far-reaching, for it suggests that the phenotypic transformations experienced by Thaïs, and, more pertinently, Mary, should be read as a type of somatic voiding – a pushing outwards to the surface of the inner corruption of the black/hypersexual instinct that once lay at the core of their identities.[55]

It is perhaps for this reason that Antony's subsequent rise to sanctity is presented in such inexorable terms. Having slain his inner *Aethiops* to establish a fully repudiated ascetic self, he becomes unmistakeably Christ-like, experiencing a sequence of visions that offer lucid and prophetic insights into questions of human identity and the impact of future events. These are presented not in hypnagogic terms conditioned by the corporeal limitations of the body, but as physical realities that lead to a series of personal and privileged engagements with celestial authority. In one such he is even able to foresee the destruction of the Arian heresy and advise those around him to take action accordingly. He becomes in this way a conduit for his disciples, a professional and hierarchically privileged visionary able to receive and interpret information denied to lesser mortals, and in this sense, a crucial influence on their desire for self-renewal.

The educated audience of the *Gran flos sanctorum* would almost certainly have regarded this transformation with reverence and awe, reading the desert not as a locus divorced from the structures of ecclesiastical orthodoxy, but as a cipher for inner withdrawal and self-regeneration. Antony, likewise, would have been seen not as a historically distant figure, whose unstructured desert existence bore no obvious resemblance to the regimented world of the cloister, but as an exemplary encapsulation of the meditative ascetic humility to which they would have aspired. The process, in this sense, is a natural continuation of the notion of *imitatio Christi* and a form of typological analepsis, with the self remodelled not simply on Christ, but through Christ's visionary proxy.

Yet as with various other examples of desert experience, the *Estoria de los santos* opts for a different approach, and significantly truncates the description of Antony's visionary experience and its prophetic effect on his disciples. This could possibly reflect an interest in ensuring narrative economy, but more likely is that the notion of spiritual development undertaken in isolation from the clergy, and in direct dialogue with God, would have been regarded as problematic. A Church unable to exercise jurisdiction, and bereft of its mediating and validating authority, is an image that could have proven counterproductive, particularly if delivered in extemporized oral fashion to an unlettered public, where its symbolic emphasis could have been misconstrued. After all, in an age rocked by heresy, the notion that individuals could receive divine messages and claim prophetic status – thereby justifying insights into the spiritual evolution of the self or of others – could potentially be used in order to justify rather than eradicate dangerous and schismatic assumptions. It is perhaps for this reason that the compilers of the *Estoria* felt unable to countenance anything other than a token exploration of ascetic visionary experience, relegating its evocative and empowering potential to the status of a minor historical curiosity.

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NOTES

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[1] *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, trans. Burton Watson, Records of Civilization: Sources and Studies 80 (New York, 1968), p. 49.

[2] For the *Gran flos sanctorum* (known also as Compilation A), see B. Bussell Thompson and John K. Walsh, 'Old Spanish manuscripts of prose lives of the saints and their affiliations, I: Compilation *A* (the *Gran flos sanctorum*)', *La Corónica*, 15 (1986–7), 17–28. For discussions of its styling, scope, and content, see Vanesa Hernández Amez, *Descripción y filiación de los 'Flores sanctorum' medievales castellanos*, doctoral thesis published as CD (Oviedo, 2008), pp.

33–166, Andrew M. Beresford, *The Severed Breast: The Legends of Saints Agatha and Lucy in Medieval Castilian Literature* (Newark, Del., 2010), pp. 31–57, and José Aragües Aldaz, 'La *Leyenda de los santos*: orígenes medievales e itinerario renacentista (con alguna nota sobre el *Flos sanctorum* portugués)', *Encontros de literatura medieval*, III: *Hagiografía medieval, Coimbra, FLUC, Centro de Literatura Portuguesa, 27–11–09*, in press.

[3] For editions, see Dwayne Carpenter, 'An Egyptian saint in medieval Spanish literature: St. Macarius the Elder', *La Corónica*, 8 (Spring 1980), 149–55, Andrew M. Beresford, *The Legends of the Holy Harlots: Thaïs and Pelagia in Medieval Spanish Literature*, Colección Támesis A238 (Woodbridge, 2007), pp. 133f. and 137f., Andrew M. Beresford, 'Sanctity and prejudice in medieval Castilian hagiography: the legend of Saint Moses the Ethiopian', in *Medieval Hispanic Studies in Memory of Alan Deyermond*, ed. Andrew M. Beresford, Louise M. Haywood, and Julian Weiss, Colección Támesis A315 (Woodbridge, 2013), pp. 11–37, Andrew M. Beresford, 'Re-reading Jerome in Spain in the Middle Ages: the *Vida de Sant Paulo* and the legend of St Paul of Thebes', *Mediaeval Studies*, 72 (2010), 1–37, and B. Bussell Thompson and John K. Walsh, *'La Vida de Santa María Egipçiaca': A Fourteenth-Century Translation of a Work by Paul the Deacon*, Exeter Hispanic Texts 17 (Exeter, 1977). The remaining legends are unedited. For Pastor, John, Arsenius, and Agathon, see Escorial h–II–18 fols 262^{vb}–67^{ra} and Biblioteca Nacional 12689 fols 214^{va}–67^{ra}; for Antony, see Biblioteca Nacional 12688 fols 204^{rb}–07^{vb} and Escorial h–III–22 fols 109^{ra}–12^{va}; and for Hilarion, see Escorial h–II–18 fol. $190^{ra–vb}$ and Biblioteca Nacional 12689 fols 137^{va}–38^{vb}.

[4] For the *Estoria de los santos* (or Compilation B), see Hernández Amez, *Descripción y filiación*, pp. 167–279, Beresford, *The Severed Breast,* pp. 59–112, and Aragües Aldaz, 'La *Leyenda de los santos*'.

[5] Escorial h–I–14 gives unique readings for Hilarion (fols 314^{rb}–22^{vb}) as well as Pelagia and Thaïs (see Beresford, *The Legends of the Holy Harlots*, pp. 139f. and 135f.). The provenance of this material, and its relationship to the five other manuscripts of the compilation, has not been satisfactorily explained. Most likely, however, is that it is a later accretion, added to the codex as it was rewritten in order to extend its otherwise relatively narrow focus. For contextual studies, see Hernández Amez, *Descripción y filiación*, pp. 167–91, Beresford, *The Severed Breast*, pp. 79–84, and Aragües Aldaz, 'La *Leyenda de los santos*'. Emma Gatland's *Women from the 'Golden Legend': Female Authority in a Medieval Castilian Sanctoral*, Colección Támesis A296 (Woodbridge, 2011) offers a partial edition of the manuscript but does not comment on its scope, formation, or relationship to the broader compilation.

[6] The four versions of Antony of Egypt's legend have not been edited, but are widely divergent in syntactic emphasis. See Biblioteca Menéndez Pelayo 9 fols 10^{r}–11^{r}, Fundación Lázaro Galdiano 419 fols 17^{ra}–18^{ra}, Escorial K–II–12 fols 36^{vb}–37^{vb}, and Escorial h–I–14 fols 42^{rb}–43^{va}. For Mary of Egypt, see Thompson and Walsh, *'La Vida de Santa María Egipçiaca'*, pp. 35–46 and Connie L. Scarborough, 'Two versions of the life of Saint Mary the Egyptian: Lázaro Galdiano MS 419 and Menéndez Pelayo MS 8', *Annuario medieval*, 6 (1994), 174–84. For an index of manuscript filiations in the compilation, see Beresford, *The Severed Breast*, pp. 242–50.

[7] The compilations serve in this respect as counterpoints to materials preserved in the *exemplum* tradition, particularly Clemente Sánchez de Vercial's *Libro de los exemplos por a.b.c.* and the anonymous *Espéculo de los legos*, which draw heavily on the insights of ascetic solitude. See respectively, John E. Keller, *Clemente Sánchez de Vercial, Arcediano de Valderas: Libro de los exenplos por a.b.c.*, ed. Connie L. Scarborough, Ediciones Académicas 1.1 (Madrid, 2000) and José María Mohedano Hernández, *'El espéculo de los legos': Texto inédito del siglo XV* (Madrid, 1951). However, several key treatments of asceticism, particularly those descended from the texts of the *Vitae Patrum*, have yet to be edited or subjected

to scrutiny. Two notable oversights are the late fourteenth-century *Corona de los monjes e diversos dichos de los padres* (Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional 9247 fols 4^{ra}–83^{vb}) and the fifteenth-century *Libro de la mesquindat de la condición humanal* (Salamanca, Biblioteca Universitaria 1877, fols 213^{r}–37^{v}).

[8] The imaginal self is an entity as ontologically real as the world of the senses and of the intellect. For a definition and explanation of the notion of the projected self as an imaginal construct, see Patricia Cox Miller, 'Re-imagining the self in dreams', *Continuum*, 1 (1991), 35–53, and for questions of ontological transformation, including a discussion of the doubled self, Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, *Dreams, Illusion, and Other Realities* (Chicago, Ill., 1984).

[9] For analepsis, prolepsis, and the broader concept of anachrony, see Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca, NY, 1980), pp. 33–85, and for an invaluable extension of his principles, Teresa Bridgeman, 'Thinking ahead: a cognitive approach to prolepsis', *Narrative*, 13 (2005), 125–59.

[10] Definitions of oneiric and visionary experience are as complex as they are contradictory. To reflect the subtlety and diversity of medieval hagiographic narratives, they are here discussed as aspects of a broader continuum of human/divine communication, embracing, in particular, auditory message phenomena, which are functionally equivalent, although seldom regarded as such. For an insightful discussion of problems of definition, see Mark Corner, *Signs of God: Miracles and their Interpretation* (Aldershot, 2005).

[11] See Miller, 'Re-imagining the self', p. 35.

[12] See Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Alan Sheridan, The International Psychoanalytical Library 106 (London, 1977), and, for an engaging theoretical application, Laura Mulvey, 'Visual pleasure and narrative cinema', *Screen*, 16/3 (1975), 6–18.

[13] 'Re-imagining the self', p. 43.

[14] Foucault writes: 'In Christianity asceticism always refers to a certain renunciation of the self and of reality because most of the time your self is a part of the reality you have to renounce in order to get access to another level of reality. This move to attain the renunciation of the self distinguishes Christian asceticism', *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, ed. Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman, and Patrick H. Hutton (Amherst, Mass., 1988), p. 35. He later adds: 'Christianity belongs to the salvation religions. It's one of those religions which is supposed to lead the individual from one reality to another, from death to life, from time to eternity. In order to achieve that, Christianity imposed a set of conditions and rules of behavior for a certain transformation of the self' (p. 40). See also Miller, 'Re-imagining the self', p. 43 and Geoffrey Galt Harpham, *The Ascetic Imperative in Culture and Criticism* (Chicago, Ill., 1987), which discusses the 'virtual obligation to reinvent' (p. 24).

[15] *The Ascetic Self: Subjectivity, Memory and Tradition* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 152.

[16] 'Re-imagining the self', pp. 43f.

[17] Ibid., p. 44.

[18] See, amongst others, Otto Rank, *The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study*, ed. and trans. Harry Tucker, Maresfield Library (London, 1989; first published 1914), C. F. Keppler, *The Literature of the Second Self* (Tucson, Ariz., 1972), and Andrew J. Webber, *The Doppelgänger: Double Visions in German Literature* (Oxford, 1996).

[19] See Miller, 'Re-imagining the self', p. 52.

[20] A notable feature of Antony's early trajectory is the extent to which the devil places false visions before him so as to bring about a fall from grace. Needless to say, as he resists and grows in stature, the potential for visionary manipulation begins to wane. In his portrait of the saint, Athanasius presents visions specifically as compensation for a life

of ascetic endurance. See *Early Christian Lives*, trans. Carolinne White, Penguin Classics (Harmondsworth, 1998), pp. 5of. For the broader context, see Isabel Moreira, *Dreams, Visions, and Spiritual Authority in Merovingian Gaul* (Ithaca, NY, 2000), pp. 16, 41. The most accessible account of saintly interaction with devils in the desert is that of Macarius. See Carpenter, 'An Egyptian saint'.

[21] See Miller, 'Re-imagining the self', p. 52.

[22] Ibid., p. 52.

[23] Moreira, *Dreams, Visions, and Spiritual Authority*.

[24] Ibid., p. 16.

[25] Ibid., p. 73.

[26] A key critical question concerns the relationship between individual recensions, and although a definitive answer has so far proven elusive, there is general agreement that while the most straightforward branch of the B stemma is constituted by two early manuscripts (Biblioteca Menéndez Pelayo 8 and Biblioteca Menéndez Pelayo 9) and a slightly later reworking (Fundación Lázaro Galdiano 15.001 – *olim*, 419), two others (Escorial K–II–12 and Escorial h–I–14) form a more distant and loosely connected branch, while a third (Escorial M–II–6) is genuinely problematic, sitting awkwardly somewhere between the two. In certain instances the relationship between the Escorial manuscripts and those elsewhere in the compilation becomes so problematic that it becomes almost impossible to build them effectively into critical editions.

[27] For observations on the relationship of the compilation to the sermon tradition, see Manuel Ambrosio Sánchez Sánchez, 'Vernacular preaching in Spanish, Portuguese and Catalan', in *The Sermon*, ed. Beverley Mayne Kienzle (Turnhout, 2000), pp. 759–858 (pp. 790f.). For editions of specific sermons, see Julián Zarco Cuevas, 'Sermón de Pasión predicado en Murcia por S. Vicente Ferrer', *La Ciudad de Dios*, 148 (1927), 122–47 and Andrew M. Beresford, 'A sermon for the feast of Saint Julian the Martyr', *Revista de poética medieval*, 24 (2010), 49–75.

[28] For a theoretical exploration of the consequences of oral culture, see Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*, Literary Theory/Communication Studies (London, 1982), and for reflections on questions of orality in the Middle Ages, *'Vox intexta': Orality and Textuality in the Middle Ages*, ed. A. N. Doane and Carol Braun Pasternack (Madison, Wis., 1991).

[29] Quotations are from Beresford, *The Legends of the Holy Harlots*, pp. 137f. Translations, unless otherwise stated, are mine.

[30] For medieval theory and its antecedents, see, amongst others, Constance B. Hieatt, *The Realism of Dream Visions: The Poetic Exploitation of the Dream-Experience in Chaucer and his Contemporaries*, De Proprietatibus Litterarum: Series Practica 2 (The Hague, 1967), A. C. Spearing, *Medieval Dream-Poetry* (Cambridge, 1976), Kathryn L. Lynch, *The High Medieval Dream Vision: Poetry, Philosophy, and Literary Form* (Stanford, Calif., 1988), Lisa M. Bitel, *'In visu noctis*: dreams in European hagiography and histories, 450–900', *History of Religions*, 31 (1991), 39–59, Steven F. Kruger, *Dreaming in the Middle Ages*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature 14 (Cambridge, 1992), Patricia Cox Miller, *Dreams in Late Antiquity: Studies in the Imagination of a Culture* (Princeton, NJ, 1996), Moreira, *Dreams, Visions, and Spiritual Authority*, and Barbara Newman, 'What did it mean to say "I saw"? The clash between theory and practice in medieval visionary culture', *Speculum*, 80 (2005), 1–43.

[31] For anachrony and questions of narrative time, see Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, pp. 33–85.

[32] Quotations are from Beresford, *The Legends of the Holy Harlots*, pp. 133f. The saint's name produces a minor element of confusion and is given in Castilian as *Tays*, *Tais*, *Yptasis*, and, as is the case in this instance, *Tarsis*.

[33] *The Literature of the Second Self*, pp. 1–13.

[34] For a discussion of the paradoxical relationship between transformation and continuity in this respect, see Beresford, *The Legends of the Holy Harlots*, pp. 91–108, and for the intellectual and conceptual background to the tradition, Benedicta Ward, *Harlots of the Desert: A Study of Repentance in Early Monastic Sources* (Oxford, 1987).

[35] The vision can in this sense be related to paintings that offer split levels of reality, with a celestial domain accessible to those with authority, and an image of the world beneath. For a convincing and thought-provoking analysis, see Victor I. Stoichita, *Visionary Experience in the Golden Age of Spanish Art*, Essays in Art and Culture (London, 1995).

[36] 'The dark side of landscape: ideology and power in the Christian myth of the desert', in *The Cultural Turn in Late Antique Studies: Gender, Asceticism, and Historiography*, ed. Dale B. Martin and Patricia Cox Miller (Durham, NC, 2005), pp. 136–49 (p. 145). See also Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity*, Lectures on the History of Religions 13 (New York, 1988) and Patricia Cox Miller, 'Jerome's centaur: a hyper-icon of the desert', *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 4 (1996), 209–33.

[37] A comprehensive linguistic survey is long overdue, and until such time as one is produced, attempts at dating must remain speculative. However, it is worth noting that while the earliest manuscripts preserve archaic features such as the *-ié* imperfect and adverbs with *-ientre* endings (which are characteristic of early fourteenth-century usage), they are replaced in later manuscript recensions by their modern equivalents.

[38] For the relationship between desert solitude and the dangers of heretical misinterpretation, see Beresford, 'Re-reading Jerome in Spain in the Middle Ages', pp. 23f. Of particular note is the final section of the *Vida de San Paulo*, which offers an attack on secular vanity that could potentially have been misconstrued as a vehement rejection not simply of the wealth of the Church, but of its increasingly coenobitic and institutionally hierarchical character. As such, it is hardly surprising that the *Estoria* account is confined to an exaggerated exploration of the legend's more lurid and sensational aspects, paying particular attention to the fate of the martyrs in the garden and the description of monstrous animal/human hybrids. Note, for instance: '¿qué fallesció a este bienaventurado viejo que estava medio desnudo en la cueva de aquel yermo? Vosotros bevedes en vasos de oro e de plata apostados de piedras muy presciadas, e Sant Paulo satisfazía a la sed natural beviendo del agua con sus manos anbas. Vosotros, ricos, amadores del mundo, avedes vestiduras texidas con oro e con plata, e este santo varón aun non avía la más vil vestidura de alguno de los menores de vuestros servidores. Mas a este bienaventurado pobrezillo fuéle abierto el paraýso, e a vosotros está presto el fuego del ynfierno' (p. 37). 'For what did this blessed old man who was half naked in the cave in that desert want? You drink from gold and silver cups adorned with the most precious jewels, and St Paul satisfied his natural thirst by drinking water with both his hands. You, rich men, lovers of the world, have garments woven with gold and with silver, and this holy man had not even the most vile garment of the least of your servants. Yet to this blessed man of poverty paradise was opened, and for you the flames of hell are close at hand.'

[39] For questions of agency and authoring, see Miller, 'Re-imagining the self', p. 52.

[40] Iacopo da Varazze, *Legenda aurea*, ed. Giovanni Paolo Maggioni, 2 vols (Florence, 1998), p. 1040. The Latin, 'a divine voice responded', is reworked elsewhere in the compilation as the same verbal formulation: 'a voice came to him which said'.

[41] See Thompson and Walsh, *'La Vida de Santa María Egipçiaca'*, pp. 35–46.

[42] Quotations are from Thompson and Walsh, *'La Vida de Santa María Egipçiaca'*, pp. 3–31. For an exemplary study of the text and its intellectual emphasis, see Joseph T. Snow,

'Notes on the fourteenth-century translation of Paul the Deacon's *Vita Sanctae Mariae Aegyptiacae, Meretricis*', in *Saints and their Authors: Medieval Hispanic Hagiography in Honor of John K. Walsh*, ed. Jane E. Connolly, Alan Deyermond, and Brian Dutton (Madison, Wis., 1990), pp. 83–96.

[43] 'Ca segunt el Señor dize en el Evangelio: "Bienaventurados son los que han linpio coraçón, ca ellos verán a Dios". E sy los que han linpio coraçón verán a Dios, quánto más verán visiones celestiales los que han linpio el coraçón e la carne, seyendo sienpre mesurados, e velando sienpre e estudiando de alcançar el galardón de la bienandança çelestial' (p. 5). 'For as the Lord says in the Gospel: "Blessed are those who are pure in heart, for they shall see God". And if those who are pure in heart shall see God, those who are pure in heart and in flesh will see many more celestial visions, always being moderate, and spending time in vigil and striving to achieve the reward of celestial happiness.'

[44] As Gavin Flood affirms: 'Asceticism is not simply the control of the passions but the imitation (*mimesis*) of God and the cultivation of a life of beauty as a reflection of God's being' (*The Ascetic Self*, p. 164). He adds that 'to imitate Christ, whose life contained both beauty and pain, is to undergo intentional suffering, as suffering and beauty are integral aspects to the Christian ascetic path' (p. 164).

[45] 'era muy hedificado, e esforçávase a seguir la perfecçión, veyendo que avía fallado buenos ayudadores del deseo de la su voluntad para se rrenovar' (p. 7); 'he was greatly edified, and stole himself in the pursuit of perfection, seeing that he had found good helpers in the desire of his will to improve himself'.

[46] Even after blessing her, it is striking that Zosimus still wonders if she is an evil spirit: 'teniendo que por ventura sería algunt spíritu malo que se infingía orar' (p. 13).

[47] For the see-saw oscillation between attraction and disgust in the scopic reception and representation of the colonial subject, see Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London, 1978; reprinted 2003). Of greater potential applicability, however, are the theories proposed by Homi K. Bhabha in *The Location of Culture* (London, 1994; reprinted 2010), notably in relation to questions of mimicry, menace, and ontological ambivalence (see especially pp. 121–31). For an exploration of comparable tensions in the medieval Castilian canon, see Beresford, 'Sanctity and prejudice in medieval Castilian hagiography'.

[48] Biblioteca Nacional 12688 fol. 204^{vb}, but see also Escorial h–III–22 fol. 109^{rb}.

[49] 'Anti-black sentiment in the *Vitae Patrum*', *Harvard Theological Review*, 71 (1978), 304–11 (p. 305).

[50] 'Ethiopian demons: male sexuality, the black-skinned other, and the monastic self', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 10 (2001), 501–35. For background, see Frank Snowden, *Blacks in Antiquity: Ethiopians in the Greco-Roman Experience* (Cambridge, 1970), Jean Devisse, *The Image of the Black in Western Art*, II: *From the Early Christian Era to the 'Age of Discovery'*, I: *From the Demonic Threat to the Incarnation of Sainthood* (New York, 1979), Frank Snowden, *Before Color Prejudice* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983), Lloyd A. Thompson, *Romans and Blacks*, Oklahoma Series in Classical Culture 2 (Norman, Okla., 1989), Peter Frost, 'Attitudes toward blacks in the early Christian era', *Second Century*, 8 (1991), 1–11, and Ivan Hannaford, *Race: The History of an Idea in the West* (Baltimore, Md, 1996).

[51] The use of the informal *tú* form is notable in this respect, as it suggests a sense of complete replacement, if not contempt, for an entity now marked comprehensively as other.

[52] 'E como se partiese della el santo viejo Panucio, preguntóle ella adó faría la nescesidat natural. E respondióle el santo varón q*ue* lo fiziese en aquella celdilla, así como era digna' (p. 133). 'And as the holy old man Paphnutius left her, she asked him where she should do her natural needs. And the holy man responded that she should do it in that tiny cell,

for that would be fitting.' Pointedly, the saint is ordered immediately afterwards to lie down, face east, and repeat a simple prayer.

[53] For epidermalization, see Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. C. L. Markman (London, 1952; reprinted 1986), and Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (pp. 96–120), which carefully nuances a number of Fanon's observations.

[54] For the tradition of the holy harlot, see Ward, *Harlots of the Desert*, and Beresford, *The Legends of the Holy Harlots*. Inevitably, monographic studies of female saints have done much to enrich critical awareness, but as the shaping of Antony's legend clearly shows, there is a danger of dealing with the sexes in isolation. For a discussion of problems of gendered analysis and the adoption of an appropriate scholarly methodology, see Beresford, *The Severed Breast*, pp. 113–49.

[55] The pristine whiteness of the evolved self is emphasized elsewhere in the desert tradition, notably by the legend of Paul of Thebes, as the saint, having mortified his body during life, ascends to heaven in the company of angels: 'E otro día, q*ue*dándole de andar camino de espacio de tres oras, vido subir a Sant Paulo, blanco así como la nieve, e claro entre muchedunbre de ángeles, e entre los coros de los profectas e de los apóstolos' (Beresford, 'Re-reading Jerome in Spain in the Middle Ages', p. 35). 'And the following day, with three hours of his journey on foot to complete, he saw Saint Paul, white like the snow, and shimmering in the company of angels, and amongst the choirs of the angels and the apostles.' For a consideration of the colour problem in the Castilian ascetic tradition, see Beresford, 'Sanctity and prejudice in medieval Castilian hagiography'.